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A

CERTAIN WAY

TO

SAVE OUR COUNTRY,

AND MAKE US A

MORE HAPPY AND FLOURISHING

People,

THAN AT ANY FORMER PERIOD OF

OUR HISTORY.

England expects every Man will do his Duty!

NELSON.

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CERTAIN WAY

TO SAVE OUR COUNTRY, &c.

LETTER I.

To the People of Great Britain,

IF ever there was a moment, when the salvation of this country depended on a steady union of the people, and an immediate, and virtuous exercise of their powers, mental and corporal, it surely is the present. It would now be a waste of time, to retrace the causes of our present danger; the great objects we must now pursue, are, first to combat our present difficulties with effect, and then to devise such practical means as may create a new era, more propitious to the human character than has hitherto been experienced. If, in the wisdom and goodness of Him who rules and governs the universe, we are relieved from the destruction, that now menaces Great Britain, no doubt can remain in the mind of any reasonable individual, but that alterations, on a

very extensive scale indeed, must be soon made in the principles and measures of our government. To renew the former system of corruption; to bestow on ignorance, profligacy, and venality, the rewards due only to virtue, industry, and talent; and, in a word, to tread again the same path, that has led us to the verge of ruin, would be to seal, irrevocably, the destinies of the empire: By our acquiescence in such a criminal procedure, we should deservedly expire as a nation, without even the meagre consolation of pity or compassion.

Let it be remembered, that our country is the first link in the great chain that supports the commercial and general interests of Europe, and, that as an entire alteration has been effected throughout the continent, it necessarily follows, that a system of policy, widely different from the present, must be adopted in Great Britain. The neighbouring nations have mostly been humbled into obedience, or effectually subdued, and we are now left without an ally, to combat, *single-handed*, a powerful people, who may consider our ruin as necessary to their security. Under these circumstances, a radical change in our political system, both foreign and domestic, becomes indispensible to our preservation; and this may be accomplished, without, in the least, trenching on the constitutional

privileges of the crown, or the rights of the people. If it be said, that a different system may be pursued, without any alteration being made in the administrative departments of our government, I answer, *experience*, that unerring guide to truth, hath sufficiently demonstrated the futility of trusting to such an experiment. To suppose that any permanent advantage could be derived from our depending on the future *patriotism* and *integrity* of men, whose errors have become habitual, would be to insult the feelings of a generous people, whose loyalty and patience, under all their sufferings, will form a bright page in the annals of their country.

It must, however, be a pleasing reflection to every honest Englishman, that we possess, not only the means of saving our country at this awful crisis, without advectitious assistance; but, under a regenerated, wise, and vigorous government, of establishing the future prosperity of the empire, on a secure and permanent basis. To point out those means, and to elucidate a new system of political agency, on which, I am of opinion, the fate of England entirely depends, shall be the chief object of my future communications. On this important occasion, I am compelled, by a sense of justice and delicacy, to acknowledge, that I owe the whole of the proposed system to the

writings of *Doctor Edwards.* This gentleman, I understand, hath passed the greater part of a long and honorable life, in devising practical expedients for the establishment of human welfare; and, in a variety of instances, his plans have been literally adopted by the executive government of the state. To the labours of this distinguished patriot, I am credibly informed, the late Mr. Pitt owed the income and property tax; and the late minister, the present mode of raising the supplies, without laying any new taxes on the people. This gentleman likewise chalked out the mode, since followed by the servants of the crown, for the redemption of the land tax; and viewed, with the most critical accuracy, the financial resources of the country, which Sir John Sinclair hath since adopted in his history of the public debt. In the works of Doctor Edwards, now before me, I find, that to his industry and knowledge we are indebted for several plans, that went to the establishment of our northern fisheries, to the improvement of the highlands of Scotland, Ireland, and the whole of the united kingdom. These, and a variety of other designs, equally essential to the prosperity and happiness of his country, are the productions of an individual, whose virtuous labours have been unsupported, hitherto, by Par-

liament, or by any man of power, or influence in the state. It appears, however, that he was not discouraged by neglect, but, depending solely on the resources of his own genius, for the completion of objects that embraced the permanent welfare of his country, he nobly persevered, and ultimately succeeded.

This acknowledgment I consider due to one of the most enlightened and disinterested men of the present age. In my next letter I shall endeavour to delineate the plan he hath lately published for the accomplishment of a new era, which is intended to expand, and harmonise, the human mind, to give stability to the throne, to rescue nations from the desolating hand of war, to perfect the arts, commerce, and manufactures, of Great Britain, and to reform abuses, that strike at the vitals of national prosperity.

THE OBSERVER.

LETTER II.

In my last communication, I have acknowledged, that to the writings of Doctor Edwards, I am solely indebted for the plan of national improvement and redress, which I propose laying before the public, under different heads; and which, if carried into effect, must create a new and happy era for mankind. The idea that first suggested this important work, Doctor Edwards informs us, originated in his observing the good effects produced by the improvement of a few parishes, adjoining to his estate, at Barnard Castle, in the county of Durham. Great agricultural improvements were lately made in that town and neighbourhood; common fields, and waste lands, were industriously enclosed; parish business, particularly that of providing for the poor, was sedulously attended to; funds and means were sought to be obtained for re-establishing its decaying manufactures; an agricultural society was formed, to improve the stock, and the different

lands, which the circle contained: attention was likewise paid to whatever might be serviceable, and useful, to the individual, and the public; and as these exertions served to fertilize the neighbourhood, and make the people comfortable and happy, it occurred to Doctor Edwards, that national perfection might be realized by similar means; and that, in fact, it would be only pursuing the same system, upon an extended scale, to establish, for ever, the prosperity of Empires.

To accomplish this great, and beneficent undertaking, Doctor Edwards hath divided the several principles that constitute a well-regulated state, into different sections, and elucidates their several uses, under twelve different heads.

I. On Government.—Doctor Edwards considers government, in addition to its being an indispensible controul over the human passions, a combination and co-operation of both legislature and people, necessary for their mutual benefit; it is the *compact social*, and effectually harmonizes the several departments of society, when generally and properly understood. Thus the supreme and legislative government, together with the great body of the people, would, in all countries, join in establishing the prosperity of their respective nations, and the individual improvement of each other, on an adequate scale; and, while they found the means provided in Doctor Edwards's

proposals, would derive from those improvements, the happiest returns, both of general and private advantage.

II. On public agency, including police. —These necessary instruments of civilization, brought to perfection, faithfully administered, and no longer restricted to ordinary views, would accomplish every thing necessary for the benefit of individuals, and the aggrandizement of nations; and would employ, with the happiest effect, all the local advantages and capacities of Kingdoms, and Empires, wherever they might be found.

III. Finance.—In the late tract, published by Doctor Edwards, we find he hath discovered the means, by which the necessary expenditures of the state may be supplied, without loading the people with additional burdens; for he hath pointed out resources that are at present unemployed, or misapplied, by which the people may be exonerated from the public debt, and an immense capital provided, that may be directed to purposes and objects of great national utility. The principal benefits to be derived from these contributions, if honestly applied, are the advancement of industry, and promoting general improvements, increasing national and individual wealth, relieving merit in distress, and duly recompensing useful service, instead of supporting wars and bloodshed; and thereby raising the prices of different com-

modities, producing artificial want, and restricting the people in those natural enjoyments which Providence intended should soften the calamities that "flesh is heir to."

IV. Manual and intellectual industry.—These comprehend, manufactures, arts, and sciences; and will effect whatever can furnish strength, population, elegance, and pleasure, in their extensive provinces; they will complete the grand stock of exchangeable commodities produced throughout the world, and supply all the services of human ingenuity.

V. Of agriculture.—This is the natural employment of man; and, therefore, merits our first consideration. Doctor Edwards very justly observes, on this important subject, that agriculture, liberally and generally encouraged, will supply, in requisite abundance, cheapness, and perfection, all the productions which the earth was created to provide for the subsistence of man. He, therefore, strongly recommends the improvement of the soil, to government, and to all classes and denominations of the people; he points out, likewise, the means for accomplishing this particular object, and for perfecting husbandry in general, and relieving landed property from injudicious burdens and oppressions.

VI. Politics.—In a late voluminous publica-

tion, Doctor Edwards observes, that under the direction and auspices of the new era, what are generally called politics, will become known to us, and all nations; they will be clearly defined, and happily established; and, as they are capable of being rendered highly beneficial to mankind, will be steadily pursued, so as to prevent them from being any longer the uniform assassins and murderers of human nature. New principles will establish permanent peace and friendship throughout the earth, and induce men to unite in improving the world, in advancing all its different interests, and fixing the standard of perpetual tranquillity.

VII. Commerce.—Trade and commerce, under the new system described in the writings of Doctor Edwards, will find immense resources, which a perfect and general knowledge of the natural interests of mankind will ensure and perpetuate; the extension and augmentation of the different productions of industry, ingenuity, agriculture, &c. will be the consequences, and afford great relief to our commercial interests, while increasing wealth and demand will cheerfully follow the boundless career of national genius, acting on the virtuous and rational principles of universal philanthropy.

VIII. Mental instruction.—Under the proposed era, what is called mental instruction, every requisite establishment, and every suitable expedient, will be brought forward in all countries, that can improve the minds of the people, qualify them for their different stations, and civilize them as men who are to form a regular community. Thus, a foundation will be laid, on which a structure may be erected, competent to employ all the energies and powers that belong to taste and intellect.

IX. Medicine.—By the united improvements of different nations, and the attention of governments to the interests of medicine in all its departments, mankind will, in every situation of life, be furnished with relief, when visited by disease; and by extraordinary efforts, in addition to those of professional people, medicine may be rendered one of the greatest blessings that has been bestowed on man by the divine author of his being.

X. Jurisprudence.—The profession of jurisprudence will be meliorated by annihilating such of its barbarous practices as have hitherto rendered nations miserable; it will advance all the interests necessary to the completion of human welfare, by associating with it the arts of practical improvement, and thus mitigate its usual severities.

XI. The appropriate arts of individual improvement, prosperity, and happiness.—Doctor Edwards observes, these appropriate arts will become as manifest under the proposed era, and be thought equally important, as those more immediately destined for advancing the public interests of nations; they will be brought to perfection by their own inherent powers, and, combined with the other advantages described in the new system, will receive a permanent and fixed establishment, so as no longer to be left to chance, and the casual fortunes of individuals; they will be diffused every where throughout society, and be supported by all the liberal and subsidiary aids of public beneficence; they will no longer be the victims of abuse and mismanagement, no longer a vain mockery of partial institutions, or confined to a wealthy metropolis, but universally extended throughout the extensive circles of empires.

XII. Religion.—In the works of Doctor Edwards, we find he describes religion to be the essence of civil policy and human welfare, the sacred bond that unites and harmonizes the world, and that a strict observance of its precepts is the genuine interest of mankind. All nations, however their devotional ceremonies may differ, still profess an unequivocal veneration for religion, and would, under its sacred influence, engage in the glorious pursuit of human welfare on an adequate

scale; they would, therefore, avoid mutual hostilities, persecution, revenge, jealousies, and rebellion, as subversive of their happiness; whilst virtue and principle would be restored to governments.

Doctor Edwards hath advanced means, which we shall proceed next to discuss, for accomplishing every useful and salutary view and object that can be proposed under these twelve heads—and the result of the whole he calls the organised aggregate of civil polity and human welfare. To these heads you may refer whatever good can be found practicable—and when you have done so, you have a competent idea of the proposed era; at the same time you will be adequate to rectify public affairs, and save the empire—since it comprises every possible resource the nation can require.

THE OBSERVER.

LETTER III.

I HAVE, in a former letter, given an abstracted view of the several heads proposed by Doctor Edwards, as an aggregate of principles, from which it is presumed a new era may be formed, that will give peace and happiness to the world. On a serious perusal of the several works published by Doctor Edwards on this sublime subject, I find he hath provided such means as will carry into complete and immediate effect the whole of his system. A principal point being ascertained, that of knowing the views and objects necessary to the completion of his undertaking, his intentions are to adapt suitable plans to them severally; to find means adequate to these plans; and, by the assistance of an intelligent agency, and all those who feel a pleasure in doing good, to carry them into execution. He hath, therefore, sedulously endeavoured to acquire those numerous resources, and expedients, necessary to his

views; he hath carefully guarded against all unfavourable incidents; he hath shewn the practicability of his system, and has evinced a greatness of mind equal to the sublimity of his undertaking.

Among the principal means he hath brought forward to effect these purposes, are commanding talents for improvement, and practical abilities; the powerful energies existing in those he hath found in study, calculation, practice, experience, science, and observation. He, at the same time, arranges, under each of the twelve heads before-mentioned, every single and detached measure that may be introduced as a useful auxiliary, and having thus completed each head, he employs it as a whole, combining the twelve as a most powerful machine for the accomplishment of his system.

Doctor Edwards hath certainly discovered a mind perfectly competent to his subject, and which, in my opinion, he hath actually exhausted, for he hath not only proposed means for accomplishing his great object, but such as would introduce, and give it effective motion, throughout every part of the empire. It must be evident to such people as duly contemplate the proposed system, that no favourable issue can be expected from the labours of any individual, however salutary, without the assistance

of all ranks and denominations of the people. The whole genius of the nation, together with the legislative and executive authorities, should unite in perfecting a system that embraces every object that can be valuable to man. The higher powers should encourage local societies to assemble, for the purpose of acquiring a talent for improvement, which is necessary to us as a species that depends, not upon its instinctive powers, but its meliorative efforts, for support and happiness. Nay, Doctor Edwards observes, that parliament, and the executive government, should, themselves, become a grand national assembly for the due cultivation and improvement of civil polity, and general welfare; their debates, on such important subjects, would be heard with reverence by the people; the several branches of the legislature would then be employed in discharging, with fidelity, the great duties which they owe to God and their country; not in forming cabals, struggling for power, places, pensions, &c. in open defiance of every principle of decency, rectitude, and honour. Lastly, as a principal means of instituting the system, he proposes to establish, under the charge of the executive government, persons of practical genius and sound abilities, whose office would be to mature his plan, for the adoption of the legislature. Ministers of state are not, and cannot be expected to be, practical

adepts in the different arts, that constitute the grand aggregate of civil polity, since those are so numerous, and of such extensive application; but as their advantages should not be lost to nations, so persons, who are proficients therein, should be associated with the executive government.

I am perfectly aware, that objections will be started to the system proposed by Doctor Edwards, chiefly on the ground of its not being practicable; because it is founded on a principle that does not exist; namely, *universal philanthropy*. To those, who are really of this opinion, I observe, that in the writings of Doctor Edwards, its attainment is evidently pointed out, and its progress cannot be obstructed, unless the apathy of the people interposes, or the intrigues of those in power, who apprehend danger from general information. It has been observed, that to enlighten the people would be to render them turbulent, and uneasy; but this is a gross mistake, for the best means, that can be devised by human ingenuity, for the permanent establishment of any government, is to give the people a due sense of their religious and social duties: ignorance is the parent of rebellion, and many of those evils that vitiate the human mind, and lead to the destruction of Empires.

It is now generally admitted, that a radical change in the administration of public affairs must soon take place, and what has happened in the world, during the last thirty years, and has lately taken place on the continent, countenances this opinion; indeed, to suppose that such a defective and corrupt state of things can exist much longer in the world, would be absurd, and, therefore, it would be prudent, if prudence only were to be consulted, to enlighten the people before national and political reformation be obtained by convulsion. By instructing the multitude, and giving them a due conception of their individual, and general interests, many of those old prejudices, that have so long debased this country, would be for ever exploded: we should no longer, for instance, be accustomed to consider the French people, our *natural* enemies; every reasonable man would soon perceive there exists no greater impediment against the establishment of an amicable union between the inhabitants of *London* and *Paris*, than might be adduced to preclude an intercourse between *this city* and *York*. We are sensible that *England*, and *Scotland*, so long engaged in the most bloody conflicts, and entertaining what was considered a mortal enmity against each other, appear now, and really are, as nations, friends, and brothers:

the reason is evident;—they have seen the folly and wickedness of that policy, which set them by the ears together, and mutual happiness is the result. The same reasoning will apply to *France* and *England*; there is not any *natural* impediment, but a nefarious *political* one, that stands in the way of permanent reconciliation, and creates difficulties, which the people are *educated* to think insurmountable. When this political impediment is exploded, civilization will necessarily follow; and all the blessings man is capable of enjoying, secured to the people. To any person, who says this reasoning is fallacious, I answer, that we are creatures whose minds and dispositions are formed by education; but, that if it were found, after an impartial, and fair trial, not possible to exterminate war, by applying to the reasoning faculties of our species, the whole of the human race must for ever bless that man, who first made so glorious an experiment.

Throughout the whole of Doctor Edward's political writings, I have observed, with much pleasure, that he recommends, in the strongest terms, *religion* and *loyalty*, and takes them as the fundamental basis of his system. He hath shewn, by arguments incontrovertible, that in this country, the constitution, as established in 1688, civil and religious, should be pre-

served without the smallest diminution; human wisdom, is is certain, never yet erected a fabric better calculated to protect mankind from the storms that too frequently convulse the political hemisphere, and, therefore, nothing should be attempted, that had even a tendency to shake the foundation. The building, it must be acknowledged, wants repair; but this may be done, and the whole strengthened and beautified, with very little trouble, labour, or expense; Every hand should be employed in this glorious undertaking, because the edifice properly belongs to the great body of the people; and they should transmit it, *in good condition*, to their children.

The preponderating influence, lately obtained by France, on the continent of Europe, naturally creates many difficulties in the minds of Englishmen, on the subject of peace. Doctor Edwards hath attended to this important subject with a very becoming solicitude, and pointed out a road that will lead us to a safe and happy home. His proposals are calculated to procure us an immediate, advantageous, secure, and permanent peace, for they counteract, on one hand, the imminent danger arising from France seeking to be a greater naval power than ourselves; while, on the other, they counteract an equal danger that would result from our persisting to engage so deeply in continental politics. Doctor Edwards, therefore,

happily compromises, between the two nations, on these important subjects. In the next place, as Great Britain and France could, if united, regulate the political affairs of the world at their pleasure, his proposals show by what suitable means the British empire may be extended and strengthened, so as to permit France to retain those advantages she appears determined to possess. Thus, by making peace advantageous to both, they will render it permanent, and, at the same time, essentially serviceable to our commercial and national interests. Further, the new system will enlighten the people of both nations, in respect of their true interests, and no longer suffer either nation to be subject to the artifices, ambition, or impolicy, of their respective governments. In fact, the means proposed by Doctor Edwards, if carried into effect here, will soften the animosity which France now entertains against this country, and restore that mutual confidence which is so indispensible to consolidate peace between both empires. The same means being adopted by the different nations of Europe, as is proposed by Doctor Edwards, would enable them to recover, in a short period, from their present lamentable state, and, by their future industry, render them independent and happy. The proposals, made by Doctor Edwards, likewise provide for the durability of the peace, and security of the country, by

an efficient plan for rendering us a martial people, and furthering every possible military service required by sea and land.

So obvious, and simple, are the foundations on which public affairs may be rectified, and the prosperity of empires completed. It remains, therefore, for government seriously to proceed upon them at this eventful crisis; and for the people, if necessary, to support them by addresses to the legislature, or reform in their representation in parliament, or by both; for it is more than probable, that government, and the legislature, will not adopt the present proposals, unless they are supported by the people.

I have endeavoured, in this small tract, to direct the attention of my countrymen to the great and glorious system proposed by Doctor Edwards. I am a volunteer in the service, and hope to find others who will act with equal disinterestedness, and more effect.

THE OBSERVER.

THE END.

G. Sidney, Printer,
Northumberland-Street, Strand.